GATH AT THE FAIR

Townsend Tells of Some Mistakes Past and Present.

REASONS FOR HARD TIMES

Something About the National Commission and Its Powers--Work of the Jury of Awards.

As we will have more world's fairs in the future, having had but three up to date, it might be well for some one to compile the story of the obstructions, misdirections and false starts in the present expensive fair.

I observe that the national commission, so-called, has a political flavor about it. Unless men are rich, or live frugally, they are not going to bestow six months of their time upon the mere matter of awards at a fair, unless they have somebody to serve, or some notions of recompense.

The Philadelphia fair of 1876 was marked by the same imperfect confidence between the local boards and the national board. The Philadelphians who had to raise the money for the fair, and whose genius and energy raised the great buildings there, looked askance upon the outsiders who came clothed with a national badge. I remember that Dobbins, the builder of the large buildings, said: "We can get along with Goshorn; but, my God, don't send us anybody else!"

Having disturbed the fair to the height of their powers, the so-called national commission and congress turned their backs upon it at the conclusion, and the Philadelphians lost all the money they subscribed to the project.

"WE CANNOT SELL IT TO YOU," SAID THE CLERK.

At one or two of the foreign fairs, and especially in France, suspicions have been entertained of the integrity of the jury of awards. In the present age an exaggerated importance is given to the medals, honorable mentions, etc., of such an exhibition. France being a republic, and subject to the same temptations and want of restraints and of corrections as our own country, the American exhibitors did not like the way the Frenchmen danced around them, as if they would like to become personally acquainted before they tested the merits of the articles displayed. Yet, there was no scandal in the sequence, and perhaps this exhibition will turn out all right. The arbitrary man who undertakes to impose his views of conferring medals and favors is generally a nuisance.

I spoke to one of the national commission the day they came to some solution of the methods of giving awards, and he said: "Mr. Thacher is right. Congress said that this should not be a competitive fair. People came here who wanted their history to be taken into consideration; that they had made certain products for a long period of time, and were not therefore to be measured with some special product which might be very carefully prepared solely for the exhibit here." Probably, in the long run, the people will care very little about medals obtained from expositions. The piano people have been the principal quarrelers on the ground, and pianos in America come under the head of wasteful running expenses.

One cause of the present uneasiness in business arises from the huge commissions paid the jobbers and go-betweens. We have seen an immense sewing machine company fail, and probably if we will look into the way it was conducted we shall find that the cost of the sewing machine was hardly ten dollars, and that by the time the unfortunate consumer received it he was paying forty to fifty dollars for it. It is the same way with life insurance all over this country. Not content with writing a reasonable amount of obligations, the particular companies want to put two hundred million dollars on as the amount of their risks, and they put in as their assets costly edifices, reared in distant states and nations, which in case of revulsion would bring but little money. If one looks around him in this world's fair he will see that the American system of paying commissions has made it almost impossible for the million of consumers to obtain that which they want at a moderate profit. Part of this is due to our having so much country to cover. All plumbers' supplies, including bathtubs and closets, are furnished to the intermediates at from forty to sixty per cent. off, an enormous amount for the ultimate consumer to pay. The wind-mill men who go over this country putting up scaffolds and pin wheels to pump water from holes and cisterns, will purchase in the next town to the consumer their iron pipe, and charge for it at forty per cent. upon what they paid, whereas the consumer himself could go into the same town and buy the pipe at commission off. Seeing in Chicago a solid oak set of interesting appearance, a lady entered and asked its price. "We cannot sell it to you," said the clerk, not naming the price. "I did not ask that," said the woman; "have you no price upon it?" "You go to somebody in the trade, and tell them to come here and buy it," remarked the merchant, "and then you can buy it from that person at whatever he will sell it to you for. Perhaps you will find some one who will not charge you the thirty per cent. commission we allow them."

In old times furniture was so much and now it is hardly so. In the multiplication of furniture and the commissions allowed to the intermediates every now and then a great bankruptcy ensues, and then the furniture from the fountain source is sold so low that one's household effects are relatively eliminated. And one effect of turning out so much stuff by machine is to glut the market, and these gluts operate directly against those who have at considerable expense bought furniture, carpets, etc. Said I to Mr. Bradley Smalley, of Vermont, who is on the national commission: "There seem to be properties out here which hold a very high figure in the stock exchange and pay a liberal percentage, upon which the banks will not lend money. How is that?"

"Oh," said Mr. Smalley, "it is, I suppose, like the story Storrs told when they asked him to come and make a speech when inflation was demanded of congress, in 1874. Storrs said he went around to a friend who was a republican banker and said: 'Gage, I want ten thousand dollars.' 'Delighted to let you have it,' said Gage; 'we have more money than we know what to do with. Sit down and write your note.' 'I wrote my note,' said Storrs, 'with my usual alacrity, but Gage took it up and said: "What collateral are you going to put up?" "Oh," said Storrs, "I have no collateral." "Sorry I cannot lend you money without collateral," said Gage. So I went over to my democratic friend, Walsh, and said I wanted ten thousand dollars. "Just the man I want to see," said Walsh; "we can't lend our money, and will be glad to lend it to you." So I sat down,' said Storrs, 'to make my note, when Walsh said: "What collateral are you going to put up?" "None," said I. "Oh," said he, "that is a horse of another color." And now,' said Storrs, turning to the crowd, 'I find that it is not a want of money at all, but only a want of collateral that is the trouble.'"

Coming upon Mr. McVicker, the veteran theater manager, one day, when an oriental banker had run away from his bank and either drowned himself or straightened his features as a disguise, I said to McVicker: "What is the trouble with the financial times?" "Apes," replied McVicker, promptly.

"Apes?" I queried.

"Yes, apes. We have been growing a large crop of millionaires in this country in the past twenty years. For these genuine millionaires there are so many ape millionaires, fellows who play the millionaire act without any sense or basis, mere imitatory, like the ape shaving himself when he sees his master do it. The failures now going on are the failures of the apes."

"Well," said a person standing by, "knowledge is power, after all. The people are finding out that not even stock exchanges register facts. I know of a certain big stock, or series of stocks, which was deliberately listed upon a stock exchange, and that stock exchange created, or manipulated, to keep the figure marked up. As long as the quotations were high and the stock was bringing six hundred per cent. more than it cost, they could, of course, pay respectable dividends, but that did not validate the bottom fact

ONE OF THE CROP.

that the exchange itself was a vehicle and prostitute for the scheme. They kept on paying dividends and marking up the stock until tight times came, and then it was found that the banks would not lend on that stock at all. The banks knew the difference between a real exchange and a fictitious exchange or bourse."

The proportion of eastern people coming out here do not like the landscape. They say the lake is too flat, the land is too flat and nothing stands up high but some fifteen and twenty-story buildings. On my way home from Chicago a fortnight past, I met a man from Washington city, who lived in Nebraska. He had with him a dying wife from the valley of Virginia, who had dropsy, consumption and everything, and had to be carried in a chair. "Ah," said the man returning home, "that shows how uncertain this life is. I lived in Washington city and I ran into congestive chills, so that I was a skeleton, and my doctor said to me: 'You have got to go out west, or you will die.' My wife was then the stout member of the family. I went to Nebraska and settled at Bent Bow. The change of climate drove away the chills; I lived in the open air and began to raise pigs. I got a pair of fine boars and had two or three hundred pigs, and got good prices for them. Unfortunately, a drought came along and put up the price of pig food; like others, I cut off my pigs in number, and don't I wish I hadn't? Pigs to-day rule the world. Everything goes down but pigs, and they go up."

AMERICAN ART.

What Can Be Seen of It in Chicago and the Fair.

The world's fair is an undertaking to see, and without some key to its effusiveness dribbles through the mind like running water. The Americans are quite desirous to make up to foreign nations in the lines of art. In point of fact, we do as much for art as a mercantile investment as any other nation whosoever of us. Hitherto most of our public statues have been made upon the spur of the moment, and most of them go to the honor of soldiers rather than men of ideas. I notice in Chicago some versatility of statuary. Here is an interesting monument by an Irishman, of an Indian family, as they lived, catching fish, etc., upon the site of Chicago, when the little river ran into the lake with nothing to vex its outflow but a little blockhouse, the site of which is marked at the last bridge going out of Chicago river, and I see it every day, with a picture of the old fort, in marble, and a full account beneath it. Mr. Palmer put up here his monument to commemorate the massacre of the garrison of this fort, who were pursued down the lake or southward, and in the rear of his house were put to death. This also is a good subject for a monument. Then, there is a statue out here of La Salle the Voyageur, who discovered the route from Niagara Falls through Chicago to Texas. I think, also, that a copy of the Lief Ericsson statue in Boston stands here. The good old man who delivered the address at the raising of that statue and became the chief antiquary concerning the Northmen in America, Prof. Horsford, I talked with at the Virginia hotel, Chicago, when the fair was opened in October last. He showed me his medals from the king of Denmark for having located the spot on Charles river, Massachusetts, where Ericsson built his town. I did not know that Mr. Horsford was dead

STATUE OF LA SALLE.

until I saw it in a little guide book describing the Rabida convent, and he died last spring. The statue of Lincoln, by St. Gaudens, in Chicago, is generally regarded as the most original and effective monument extant of that great man. Not far from it is a very imposing equestrian statue of Grant, overlooking the lake, one of the largest statues in this country. On the front of the same lake, some four miles distant, is the statue of Stephen A. Douglas, on the summit of a high monument. Between the two is the recently erected statue of Columbus. The statue of the Republic will also, I understand, be the model for numerous sculptural creations to come. In another part of the town is a statue of Columbus when he was a student at the University of Pavia. The Germans have erected a statue of one of their home poets in a park in Chicago. Statues of several benefactors of the town are to be found here and there. I recite these works to show that the sprit of statuary has gone far west.

While looking through the picture galleries it seemed to me that the great body of the Americans wanted some key to the successful painters who had made their mark. I passed along with a pair of foreign artists and picked up these points about some of the men we read of:

Laurenze Alma Tadema was born in old Friesland, Holland, in 1836, fifty-seven years ago; was a pupil of Baron Leeys at Antwerp, and from youth busied himself with Roman and Egyptian antiquities, things much affected by the English, who liken themselves to the Romans and from Shakespeare have robust models of Roman scenes. A London and a Roman mob are a good deal alike. He married an English painter. Rembrandt was not more familiarly daring than this Dutchman with so-called sacred and antique scenes; but Rembrandt had the humor of a Bacchus, the concentration of Vulcan; Tadema seems to be a scene setter and painter, his meritorious work presently to be hauled apart, the vestures and silver gods, harps and distaffs to go presently to the property room. His wealth of particulars seems like a shop of antiques, the keeper whereof has no settled craft or line. Modern art thus surfeits us often with its ease of classicalism, like Schlieman, the money-maker, digging up Agamemnon and his finger rings and lamps. Bartholdi was a pupil of Ary Scheffer, the Flemish Frenchman, who put old gold into painting and hased the tableaux of history till they took the blue hue of the ghost's atmosphere on the sky-lines of Elsinore. Bartholdi has been exhibiting since 1852—forty-one years. The instinctive seizure of the French on good themes is a high department of their art. They are never in want of a subject, be it still or theatrical. Bartholdi has made the Gallic barbarian who resisted Cæsar, Vercingetorix, live again, has revived old Lafayette, who is not popular in France because

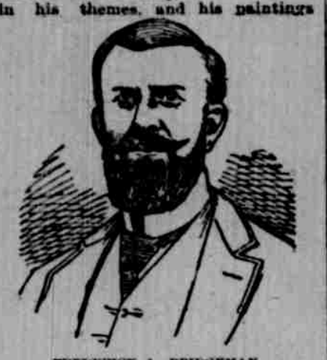
STATUE OF GRANT.

he did not force the enemy's center, fire two hundred cannons, dismiss an ambassador, divorce his wife and kick the stage manager down the empire stairs. Now and then a French artist like Baudry declines commissions unless to paint some grand opera house ceiling with puissant or atmospheric nudes. Bonnet came from Bayonne, born sixty years ago, and studied at Madrid under Madrazo, and was sent to Italy by friends.

Frederick A. Bridgeman was born in Alabama, 1847, studied bank-note engraving, went to the Brooklyn art schools, and at nineteen became a pupil of Gerome, who was twenty-three years his senior. Gerome entered Delaroche's studio in 1841. These two artists will be some centuries being displaced, and there is a resemblance in their methods. Gerome seems the Euphorion son of Delaroche Faust. He took the wife of Stevens as he would borrow a picture frame, or Manet take away his friend's wife. Vassiar Beutik, a Bohemian, was born where Wallenstein revolted against the empire. He studied at Prague and with Piloty, and threw himself into the Hussite and old Bohemian themes. He is the revolutionary painter of Europe, what David was to the French revolution, the counterpart in Austrian-Hungary. Since 1868 Brozik has been exhibiting. W. F. De Haas, born 1809, and M. F. H. De Haas, 1832, were both Rotterdammers who settled in New York and painted American themes, showing the transmutable or rather genuine character of Dutch art. Edward Dubufe is the son of Charles Marie Dubufe, a noted portrait painter, who died in 1864; the son was born in 1810, and blended lessons from his father and Delaroche, and began to show in 1839, and made popular portraits. Mariano Fortuny came from near Barcelona, Spain, born 1838, and was on Prim's staff in Morocco. He married Madrazo, the Spanish court painter's daughter, and between Rome, Granada and Morocco painted like Rubens in his day of wealth, a master of the novelist's themes, worldly priests, Moor judges, the insect in the man, and he painted the day he died of the Roman fever, a Walter Scott in the number of his parasites. Powell Frith is a Yorkshireman, born 1819, and produced the "Derby Day" in 1854, the "Railway Station" in 1862, which brought him forty-five thousand dollars from an engraving publisher, who made eighty thousand dollars with and by it.

Cabanel, from the south of France, was sent to Rome at government expense to be educated, after he had produced two notable pictures, and from painting tableaux he went into portraits, and became the favorite painter of Empress Eugenie; he made modern women Venuses, and so refined his flesh-tints that he approached insipidity, but he brought up a good many excellent students, for painters are known by their pupils as well as by their paintings.

Meissonier came from Lyons, born the year before the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte. He chose genre subjects, and was both military and sentimental in his themes, and his paintings



FREDERICK A. BRIDGEMAN.

bounded up to high prices. An American from Cincinnati gave about $30,000 for one of his military pieces twenty-five years ago. Stewart, of New York, gave $60,000, it is believed, for one of his Napoleon pictures, on which he is said to have worked fifteen years, and which stands about the highest in size of any of his canvases. He had an accurate hand, and could therefore paint in small proportion with all the reality of one far-sighted, who sees things in distant perspective. All in all, he has been the most worldly wise of modern painters, and it is hard to believe that genre painters of the seventeenth or eighteenth century were any better than himself.

PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS.

Men Whose Names Are Familiar to Students of Art.

The French give out strong themes for their young art students, and Lefebvre, the exquisite draughtsman who painted the wonderful nude called "Truth," with the lamp, had to take for his subject when a boy "The Death of Priam," thus inviting classical research. Knaus, a German who cut loose from the Dusseldorf school and imitated the French, among whom he lived eight years, has a strong reputation in this country, from the high

WORLD'S FAIR STATUE OF THE REPUBLIC.

prices some of his pictures have obtained, such as "The Holy Family," in the Metropolitan museum in New York. He was born in 1829. Neuville, whose battle pictures of the last French war have been immensely multiplied in photographs and colored copies, came from the Belgian end of France, and was born rich and elegantly educated, and entering a military school struck his professor with his genius in drawing. His family, however, did not want to see him an artist, and he entered a law school in Paris, but continued to sketch all the time, still among the military cadets. The artists tried to discourage his father from letting him come among them, but he took a prize in 1859, when he was twenty-three years old, and Eugene De Lacroix, an eminent artist, took a fancy to him, and he obtained a commission to paint Garibaldi, which he did very badly, but at twenty-five one of his soldier pictures pleased the French, though he had to make woodcuts for a living after he left his father's house, and drew for most of the French illustrated papers. Mr. Walters, of Baltimore, and other Americans have purchased his pictures, which are strong in their physiognomy and gesture.

Tyron, whose pictures we see with admiration of French pastoral scenes, sheep, landscapes, etc., was intended by his parents to be a painter of porcelain, and he actually went into the porcelain factory at Sevres, which gives such a fine exhibit here, but he preferred a wider range, and began traveling through France and Holland